

A Case of Hallowe'en

by whirligigkat

Category: Harry Potter, Sherlock

Genre: Friendship, Humor

Language: English

Status: Completed

Published: 2016-04-08 15:46:33

Updated: 2016-04-08 15:46:33

Packaged: 2016-04-27 21:49:19

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 8,487

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Remus shoves the deerstalker into Sirius's chest, his grin growing obscenely- "You're Sherlock Holmes, wear the damn hat!" The Marauders have a Halloween contest- who will win, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, or King Arthur and his Faithful Squire? Awesome cover image by fellowshipofthedragonmark.

A Case of Hallowe'en

A/N:** This is actually a chapter from my longer fic, Maraudic Revelations. I just realized that this chapter sort of functions as a crossover, and as a one-shot simultaneously. Anyway, there were too many Sherlock jokes that I threw in there that I just had to share this on its own! ******

****A CASE OF HALOWE'EN****

****October 31, 1972****

****7:42 AM****

The floorboard creaks. Ever so slightly. The socked feet pause, carefully, feeling their way around the disgruntled floorboard. They are tentative, and trying with utmost sincerity to be sneaky.

The feet stop.

James is awake. He has been awake since the first _creak_ hit his ears, because it is Halloween, and he knows: this means _anything_ could happen. _

It also probably means that Sirius is about to pounce- in an effort to be, how shall we put it- _surprising_. To be the first one to greet James's waking moments; to be generally exuberant on this, _All Hallows' Eve_.

The feet pick up speed, softly. The moment of impact is nigh- James

braces himself- _any moment now-_ it comes, and James shrieks his battle cry into Sirius's ears, leaping up at him and commencing the scramble of fists and hair and raised voices that seems to follow them everywhere.

"_Nnaughhh!"- _this one from Remus- is less expected, as he leaps into the fray, surprisingly alert. The bed groans at the addition of a third vaulting body. At which point Peter, who has somehow managed to stay asleep until this very moment, pushes back his hangings, shuffles over to the ball of limbs, and throws himself in with a scream of "_Infidels!"_

It is a curious thing that boys revel in the expending of pointless energy to such a degree. A fight- or this might be more aptly named a _Tussle-_ often occurs over a stolen piece of chocolate, an insult to one's generally adolescent manliness, or for No Good Reason. The point, however, seems to be in the joy of connecting fists with faces, of spending this overabundance of wildness in the most primitive way possible. Boys will be boys, and, in the case of the Marauders- they are very much boys.

And in this revelation that, inevitably, Remus is the one to have, in the midst of flailing fingers and banged elbows and musky armpits- he is dealt a good one from James's foot into his stomach- _oof!-_ and falls hard onto the floor.

"Alright there, Moony!"

James's head pokes over the side of the bed, looking down at him concernedly. His face looks too small without his glasses.

"Your head is too small without glasses," says Remus, "and my arse hurts."

"You're _incorrigible." _James says, flopping onto his stomach and hanging off the edge.

"Awfully big word for a Saturday morning, Potter," Sirius has joined him, peering down at Remus, who has stretched himself out, stomach down, on the hard wood floor, and is massaging his offended posterior.

"Got it from Remus,"

"Eh? How's that?"

"He keeps a list of _Big Words Intended for Conversation_, didn't you know?"

"Ooooh, oh oh oh, this does explain a lot,"

"Hang on, I've locked that in my jou- have you been going in my desk! That's _private-!_"

"Oh, of course it is, I hadn't noticed-"

"Hang on, did Pettigrew _go back to sleep?"_

"He _did! Un_believable! Oi, Pete! Wake up, you silly sausage! It's _Halloween!"_

"Nnrgh."

"OI! PETE! Wake UP!"

Peter is rolled unceremoniously off the side of the bed and onto Remus. The sound of groans fills the dormitory.

****JP**SB**RL**PP****

9:12 AM

Sirius paces once, twice, thrice, in front of the blank stretch of wall. The tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy leers down at him from opposite, offering nonsense by way of greeting.

"How many times has he got to do that?" wonders Peter aloud.

"Shh! He's concentrating!"

"I can _see_ that, but I still don't understa-"

A door pops into existence. Sirius quits his pacing, his face a picture of excitement and eagerness. Remus comes to stand at his side, jumper-clad shoulders brushing against him. They take a moment together, appreciating the brilliance that is _Magic._

James lets out a long, low whistle from between his teeth, incredibly grateful that his Dad had finally saw fit to share the secrets of Hogwarts with him. "Bit by bit," he had said, "One secret at a time. That way, you'll _appreciate_ each and every one." And then, when the owl had come this morning..

Sirius has reached out a tentative, reverent hand to the door, Remus bobbing in his wake, _open it, open it!_ - and in the door swings, ever so gently. The boys crowd through, breaths caught in their throats-

And it truly is a thing of wonder.

"_Happy Halloween!_" Sirius finally manages. A banner echoes his thoughts, unfurling across the ceiling, _Happy Hallowe'en!_

The room has decked itself magnificently, stuffed to the brim with enough costumes to make even the most disinterested of us weep with the need to _touch_, to _try_, to _see_. _Mummy's_ linens line a far corner amid buckets and pouches of what looks suspiciously like blood but, Remus hopes, just _can't_ be- knick-knacks and odd paraphernalia of every possible disguise crowd into overflowing dressers. Clanking suits of armor for those not afraid to be inserted into eighty pounds of metal stand tall amongst Medieval trappings, rich velvets to attire royalty flow over the floor, little ermine tails dangling from capes- bows and arrows adorn a near wall along with decorative feathers and tiny loin-cloths, for the not-so-faint of heart.

"This is bloody brilliant," Peter says, echoing all of their thoughts. There are mute nods of agreement, as the four of them spread across the room, odd exclamations of excitement and admiration bursting from their lips. Peter has quickly loaded a couple of very

heavy looking gold chains across his chest, pausing in front of the mirror to admire the effect. James pulls on a lurid purple velvet hat, complete with an enormous ostrich feather, while Sirius fingers a rusty looking tiara with a large blue gem encrusted into an eagle. "Think this might have something to do with Ravenclaw?" he calls to James.

"Dunno! What, are you going to wear that!...Ooh, I know you could be Rowena Ravenclaw!" James says enthusiastically, coming over to inspect it. Sirius looks doubtful, and the moment is thankfully broken by a muffled exclamation from the other side of the room.

Remus has been trailing his fingers across the hundreds of beautiful costumes, fingering furs and crinolines, touching waistcoats and brass buttons and tarnished pocket watches when he spies it. "Oh!" he yelps, and sprints across the room. There they are, hanging innocuously from an antique hat stand- the tidy black bowler and the tweedy deerstalker. He is in raptures, as he reverently removes the hats, placing the bowler carefully on his head, while crossing the room to stand in front of Sirius.

"What's this?" Sirius asks, James and Peter looking curiously on as Remus's grin grows obscenely. Honestly, pure-bloods!_

"You do know, I made you read it last summer- and anyway-" he shoves the deerstalker into Sirius's chest- "You're Sherlock Holmes, wear the damn hat!"

****SB**RL**JP**pp****

"But why does he get to be Sherlock Holmes?" grumbles James, as he flicks through the racks of costumes. He's a little irked that it was Remus to seize on the idea of matching costumes first, it's him and Sirius that are best mates anyway, and it sometimes bothers him- childishly, he knows- when Remus is the one to seize Sirius's attention.

"Because he's read it, and you haven't. And anyway, Sherlock Holmes doesn't have glasses."

"That's not a reason!"

"Well I had the idea, and I think Sirius makes more sense as Holmes. ..Sorry, though, we could- I dunno, we could all four be Musketeers..?" Remus feels slightly bad, he really does, but he also knows that this is finally the chance he's been dreaming about ever since he stuck his over-large nose into a book of Conan Doyle's at a very young age, he's got the whole day to dress up in over-stuffed Victorian sensibilities which are, truthfully, what his head is mostly attuned to. He twirls his enormous fake moustache outrageously, and fingers the pocket watch in his waistcoat pocket. It's horribly pleasing, and he can't stop the twitchy smile that creeps across his face, whiskers tickling his lips.

"No, no, by all means.." James says sulkily, before- "OH, I know. I know! This Halloween, there are going to be rules."_

"You can't be serious, James, rules-!_ It's not the Marauder way-" Sirius says indignantly, pulling on his ridiculous cape.

"Oh but it's _Remus's_ way, isn't it? Remus _adores_ rules, just laps them up- and anyway, it'll be more of a contest. With rules. Anyway."

"Oh?"

"Yes. You and Remus against me and Peter. And Peter and I will beâ€| James casts around the room for inspiration, and seizes on a tunic with a large cross on. A very kingly-looking crown is perched at a lopsided-angle nearby. "â€|King Arthur! And hisâ€|squire. Squire? Unless you have a Knight you'd rather be, Pete? Gawain? Galahad? ..Lancelot?"

"No no, Squire is fine, Squire is good," Peter agrees happily.

"So it will beâ€|Courage against Cleverness! See who can save more damsels, clear more cases, by Feast-time? Muggle way, of course."

"_Muggle_ way-!"

"They're Muggle ideas, what are you going to do!"

"Fine. It's a deal. You're only going off to impress Evans anyway, I can feel it."

"So what if I am?"

Peter clears his throat. Remus looks _much_ too pleased with himself, and Holmes is, inevitably, sulking.

"James, I just thought- well, you know, King Arthur needs a horse, and, well-" Peter gestures helplessly to the center of the room, where a very large, black and rather evil looking stallion has appeared. James utters a little squeak. The horse thumps its hooves against the stone-flagged floor, glaring menacingly at them. This particular horse, it seems, has got it In For Them- _all_ of them, and would presumably rather be munching on hay. Or it's possible that _this_ horse has got razor-sharp teeth and would rather be munching on _them_- you could really never know with the Room._

"Erm, ok, good idea Pete, but maybe- maybe a bit- big? Too big, yeah, too easy to squash cowardice when you're mounted on that great hulking beast..more scared of the horse than of..consequences.." James ends in mumbles, looking anywhere but in the eyes of the brute, who is staring daggers at him in a way very uncharacteristic of a horse. "Ok, how about- how's about a pony then, eh? Or-"

"Or a donkey?" Peter puts in. They are greeted with the pathetic sight of a long-suffering donkey to replace the imposing stallion. It eyes them woefully and sighs.

"I am _not_ going around Hogwarts on that thing!" The donkey gives them one more reproachful look before disappearing. Sirius has abandoned all pretense of a straight face and is laughing so hard his face is beginning to dot with tears.

"Sirius, _stop_, we've got the best costumes ever and- we can't ruin it! I just need-"

"Oh! James, I know- "

"Another brilliant idea, Pete?"

Peter scurries across the room to retrieve what looks like two brown, hairy, cylindrical..things.

"What are- "

"See!" Peter says, "They're coconuts! We just, bang 'em together, like this- " he demonstrates, striking the two sides of the divided coconut together- "and it sounds just like a horse, and that way, see, we don't actually need a horse!"

Holmes and Watson slide to the floor in a fit of giggles. Alas for Victorian dignity.

****JP**PP**SB**RL****

"Alright then, chaps: the Feast is at Half Six, we have approximately..eight and a half hours to reconvene and share results."

"And no magic."

"And no magic. Unless Snape is involved."

"Well, yes, obviously. Or if one of us is in..dire straits."

"But only if."

"Do you know, I'm really very impressed with your rule-making skills. Who'd've thunk it, King Arthur and Sherlock Holmes..collaborating?"

"Shut it, Moony, this was your idea- "

"No, it was really James. Truly. Honestly."

"..Fair point. Well then, may the best duo win!"

"To Chivalry and Courage!"

"To the Science of Deduction!"

"I bid you, my fair fellows, adieu!"

"The game, I think, is afoot!_"_

****JP**SB**RL**PP**

Estimated Time to Feast: 08:30

"Where to first, O Squire?"

"Well seeing as I'm the squire and you're the King..isn't that more up to you?"

"Right you are, Pete. I suppose we just..roam the countryside for

unabashed villains or distressed maidens? Or both?"

"Well, there's Xeno Lovegood right there, we could start with him."

"Ah! A charity case! Good man, Pete. I say, good sir! What seems to be amiss!"

Xenophilius Lovegood has appeared, serendipitously, at the end of the corridor. He stands, as erect as he ever is- which is to say, never-with bedraggled dirty blond hair tied back with a bit of cord, his wand tucked behind his ear, and disheveled robes which seem to be in a constant state of motion. In another time, another place, he might have easily been mistaken for homeless; it is lucky that our friend is a wizard and as such, will never have to make do without his wand. He eyes the pair balefully, dressed as they are a bit ridiculously in chain mail, tunics, crown and coconuts. His focus lands, without hesitation, on the coconuts in Peter's hands.

"What're those?" he asks. Really, it couldn't be any other way.

"They're coconuts, we're- we're using them to bang together, they sound a lot like a horse, see- " _clip clap, clip clap._

"No we _aren't_, Pete, put those away- "

"Ah, I see, you must be King Arthur."

"Well, yes, and this is my faithful servant- "

"-squire- "

"-squire- Peter."

Xenophilius sweeps a magnificent bow to them, all swishing robes and perfect submission to the King- but then his head pops up and the effect is ruined.

"I say, but how'd you get the coconut? That's a tropical fruit, and I don't think the house elves are very keen on non-British foods." He's produced a notebook from seemingly nowhere, and his eyes have narrowed to little slits of concentration. There is a quill balanced between his slender fingers, and he looks as if he might actually pounce. "For the school paper, you know- readers want the _truth. _Where'd you get the coconut?"

James gulps. It's not as if they're doing anything _wrong_, it's just a coconut, they're _just _King Arthur and Faithful Squire- but there is a hint of asperity in Xeno's stance, and he realizes that one day- and in fact, on _this _day- it would be a Very Bad Thing to be on the wrong end of his quill. And, the Room...! What an awful thing it would be, on the very day of its re-discovery, to let the _whole school_ in on it's fantastic secret. So James swallows and, for once in his life, turns to Peter for inspiration- and Peter, sensing this, rises to the task.

"Well, see, the, the coconut, it isn't native to Britain, is it? But it _is_ tropical."

"So you're saying you found a coconut in the school?" asks Xeno, as he twirls his quill menacingly.

"Well, it's possible something brought it to the grounds- say, a dragon, or a bird of some sort- "

"Are you suggesting that the coconut was brought along with a migrating creature, or are you suggesting that coconuts migrate?"

Peter flounders. Wide eyes from James indicate he is _on the right track_. _Inspiration comes in wild torrents, as his mind grasps at ideas like a fish gasping for water_. _This is really Remus's job_, he thinks, and it is not helpful.

"Well- well this _is_ a temperate zone, obviously, how _else_ would you suggest it got here?"

"But there are no dragons on the grounds."

"Not that we _know_ of. And anyway, it doesn't have to be a dragon, it could be a- for instance, a swallow, swallows _are_ known to migrate, you know- "

"A swallow carry a coconut! Look, no, it's not possible- "

_Nothing for it now, go for it, Pete, go on, quickly, before you deflate- _"And why not?"

"Because a swallow is about eight inches long and is generally _tiny,_ that's why, and a coconut- well, look at it!"

"It could grip it by the husk- "

"It's not a matter of where it's being _gripped_, it's simply a matter of weight-ratios! A five ounce bird could not carry a one pound coconut!"

Peter is out of his depth. He knows it. James knows it. _Xeno_ knows it. A glance at James, and they begin to back away slowly, surreptitiously. Xeno inches closer, the tip of his quill glinting maliciously in the nonexistent light.

"Look, to maintain velocity, a swallow needs to beat its wings four-hundred-ninety-three times a second- "

"Two sparrows! I mean, swallows, two swallows..!" Peter shouts it over his shoulder, banging the coconuts together wildly, as they retreat down the corridor, _Run away, run away!_

****Mission: FAILED.****

****Status: King Arthur and Squire: 0****

****Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: 0****

*****JP**PP*****

****Estimated Time to Feast: 07:43****

They are making a list. Which doesn't exactly bode well for Holmes and Watson, because I can't recall a single time in the books where Dr. Watson turns around and says, "I say, Holmes, I've a splendid idea- why don't we make a list of all possible crimes taking place at this very moment in London?" And Holmes replies, "Why, what an astonishing idea, my dear Watson; what a pity it is we haven't made more use of those excellent brains of yours before."

No. Sir Conan Doyle had none of that. Which is why it is in exceptionally bad taste to place our two would-be heroes, Remus and Sirius, Watson and Holmes, in the Gryffindor common room making a list of All Possible Crimes Taking Place At This Very Moment In Hogwarts. But there you have it: Remus will prevail where he chooses, and sadly for Sirius, they are horribly out of character. Thus, it goes to follow:

"I am bored. Boooooorrrrrred. I wish I had, you know, one of those muggle contraptions that starts with a bang and ends up sometimes killing people. I could use it to decorate the wall. The wall needs more decoration, it's a bit- _dull_, wouldn't you say?"

"Quiet, Sirius, I'm almost finished." Remus pokes his tongue between his teeth in consternation, dripping ink blots onto the parchment.

"Is this what you dragged me into? _List_ making? Did Holmes and Watson _list_ people to death?"

"No, they solved crimes you idiot- and anyway, this will be useful. Once I'veâ€¦finished it."

"I don't remember a single time in those books where they made lists. They deduced. And Watson, as I recall, sort ofâ€¦puttered along. _I_ ought to be in charge of this mission!"

"Have you got any better ideas?"

"_Loads. _Loads, Moony, _anything_ is better than this!"

Remus sits back in his chair, and suddenly he is all business. He crosses his ankles, and tweaks his moustache. "Well Holmes? Surely you must have some..theory?"

"Ohhhhhh this is how we're playing, is it? Here, give me the bloody list.." Sirius grabs it from Remus's hands, earning him a reproachful glance. He looks down at the parchment.

It says:

James is probably beating up Severus over Lily.

And nothing else.

For the space of two heartbeats, Remus twirls his moustache a little manically. _I really must get myself some facial hair._

"That's _it?!_ Moony, we've been here a _half hour_, and this is all you've got?! Sod this, let's go- "

"_Where_ though? It's a lot harder to actually find, you know,

crimes afoot in Hogwarts than it is to talk about- I hadn't exactly thought it through- "

"Isn't that what Watson is _for, _to think things _through?"_

Sirius has bounced from his seat, and is leaping the stairs up to the dormitory in quick succession, Remus at his heels. "Why are we going up- " Remus begins, but stops when he crashes into Sirius standing, as he is, in the doorway to their room. He has done this because Frank Longbottom is kneeling in front of Sirius's trunk, digging through it furiously with his bare arse stuck up in the air.

There is a little pause, where they stand with furrowed brows and heads cocked in either direction, eyeing Frank's stodgy little bum as it waves about. Clothes are being torn from the trunk; Frank finds a pair of underpants, sniffs it, and throws it over his shoulder with an exclamation of disgust.

"Anything I can help you with there, Frank?"

Frank jerks upright, turning on the spot, the flush from his cheeks carrying down to his neck. He has clutched his hands instinctively over his nether-regions, and wafts of embarrassment emanate from him, until curiosity gets the better of him, and-

"Hang on, what're you wearing?"

Sirius, that Master of all things imperious, has gathered Holmes to himself as if in the space of a breath- all heightened lengths and a way of looking down his nose, which all of a sudden seems rather thin. "I could say the same," he says sharply. It is enough to make the blush covering Frank's face and neck extend to his torso. "I could, of course, _ask_ what you are doing in my trunk, but I find it would be irrelevant. It is obvious to me that someone has stolen your clothes."

"Well, _yeah, _excellent observation there- "

"_And _all of the subsequent fourth year boy's garments. Am I to assume you were all in the shower..together?"

Frank reddens. Considerably. Even more. "Well, no-o-oo, it was a laugh, really, see we had this idea-"

"Stop! Please; do not insult me with your words, they're putting me off anyway. And I know the predicament _and _the culprit already. Oh, Moony- Watson- this is fun, I've already solved one!"

"What- but- _how? _All we've got to go on is the fact that he's in his birthday suit!"

Sirius smirks. It is insufferable, and Remus begins to regret his decision to make Sirius into Holmes. "Isn't it obvious? Look, he's naked, _why is he naked?_"

"He said they were- all- in the baths, God knows why- "

"No, he's lying, look at his hair, why's his hair wet if his body isn't? Look at him, why isn't he dripping? "

"So howâ€¦"

"Frank, if you'll excuse me- " Sirius steps forward quickly, slamming the trunk shut- "Next time you brew a Disintegrating potion _do_ try and keep a better lid on it. Or, here's a thought, _an actual cauldron _and not some completely imbecilic container- "

"Oh- it was plastic- like the Muggles use, yeah, might've been a bit stupid.." Frank is staring at them bemusedly, shuffling around and trying to find a way to stand so his bits won't show. He makes a movement to scratch his head, but thinks better of it.

"_Plastic!.._Watson, what's plastic, hurry up now- "

"Um, it's a material that Muggles use- "

"Yes, yes, alright, and therefore astonishingly inferior to a _cauldron_. The stupidity is astounding."

"Well, it was just a for a laugh, see- "

Sirius gives Frank a withering look, and he falls silent. He seizes him by the elbow and says, steering him towards the door, "Unfortunately, our clothes are not available for your attire, and as such I suggest you avail yourself of the many owls in this castle to order yourself a new set of robes. Off you go, good day." And closes the door in Frank's very red face.

"Sirius, I still don't quite- "

"Holmes."

"Holmes, then- what about the hair, why was it wet and not the rest of him?"

"Oh, the potion exploded, didn't you know? There were specks of that plaaastic? Well, that muggle material- in his hair- and anyway, how else would his hair get wet, but not the rest of his body?"

"Then why isn't his hair.."

"Do keep up, Watson, this was embarrassingly simple. Look, the potion was obviously deviated in a way intended for the breakdown of fabric fibers- probably intended for some joke shop, nice idea, by the way- because if it was ingested and it made _everything_ disintegrate, you can imagine how that might be problematic- or maybe just the hair- oh now _that's_ a splendid idea, Watson, write that one down."

****Mission: ACCOMPLISHED****

****Status: King Arthur and Squire: 0****

****Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: 1****

******SB**RL******

****Estimated Time To Feast: 04:43****

A knife goes whizzing past his ear, clattering to the ground after the blade scores the stone wall behind him. As diminutive as a house elf is, apparently they have steely arms full of strength and finesse.

"My good people!" shouts King Arthur, from behind the overturned table he and his Faithful Squire have set up in defense, "I am merely propositioning your freedom from _slavery! You are being _oppressed_, don't you see it? Oh hello, Toogo, sorry about that last body-bind.."

Toogo gives an indignant squeak, and a volley of ladles is sent as acknowledgment.

"James-" pants Peter.

"My Liege will do."

"Right, My Liege! My Liege, since when do we give a flying hippogriff about elf's rights!"

"Well, I suppose we really don't-" - there is a whoop, and a hail of carving knives fly past the legs of the table; they duck and shield heads faces with their arms- "But _King Arthur_ would, he's valiant and chivalrous and all that and- look we really haven't had any better ideas-"

"Do you think THIS is a good idea, My Liege!"

"We are doing a Good Thing! Did you bring the socks?"

"Well, yeah, but.."

"Give them here, Squire."

The battle cries of the infuriated elves have reached peak pitch. This may have something to do with the batch of custard creams that King Arthur and Co. ruined with overly gallant attempts to overthrow the autocracy which, as it turns out, the elves were supremely unconcerned with and _much_ more infuriated with the delectable pile of sweets now laying overridden in the floury dust of the room. O for the sweet mouths of Hogwarts Students, who would have relished these delectable little gems!

James and Peter have divided the socks between them, rolled them into balls (after much deliberation on how exactly to ball a sock,) and are steeling themselves to the seemingly unending onslaught of kitchen utensils. Thankfully it seems that the knives have been spent, with only the teaspoons remaining.

"Right, on the count of three, then?"

"Right. Wait- not four, or two, but three being the number?"

"Three being the number."

"Five is right out."

"Look, I said _three_ didn't I? Three being the number!"

"Three being the number!"

"Oneâ€|."

"â€|Twoâ€|"

"â€|THREE!â€|"

And with yells moste fearsome did the Plucky King Arthur and his Faithful Squire, in the name of Elf Rights, stand themselves erect from behind the wobbly table; and they did lobbest the socks into the sea of angry little elf faces, thus liberating all of them that did catch the socks, with woeful cries moste stringent upon our Noble Chap's ears.

****Mission: DEBATABLE****

****(Let it be marked in the tomes of History that on this day, 31 October 1972, the House Elves of Hogwarts lodged an official complaint to the Headmaster as to the behavior of the students. This, being the first ever recorded complaint by House Elves, was justly included in the updated edition of Hogwarts: a History.)****

****King Arthur and Faithful Squire: 1/2****

****Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: 1****

******JP**PP******

****Estimated Time To Feast: 04:12****

"Well I think that went fairly well."

"Indeed it did."

"Although I've no idea of where that goat came from."

"It was quite coincidental."

"The Universe is rarely so lazy, Watson; that goat was planted."

"Was it now?"

"I thought it wasâ€|fairly obvious. Use your brains, Moony, you can't be _that_ stunningly un-observant."

"You know, I'm getting quite sick of this act."

"And why, pray tell?"

"Because..that! THAT! Because it's all arrogance and none of the deductive skill! I don't know how you're actually solving anything-"

"I _beg_ _your_ pardon?"

"You're being incredibly rude, and obnoxious, andâ€|and a bloody wanker! Just because _you're_ Holmes- and I can't believe I nominated

you for that- and I'm Watson, doesn't give you the right to treat me-

"Well, look, it's in the books, right? Holmes treats Watson like utter crap, but they're inseparable. It's written! Go blame the author."

"Oh yes, that's all very well, let's blame the author- and by the way what a memory and deductive style you've got all of a sudden, hm? Where did that come from?"

"It's photographic, you know."

"No it isn't, Sirius."

"I am a brain, Watson- the rest of me is a mere appendix. Do not question my methods," says Sherlock Holmes, and waggles his eyebrows outrageously.

****Mission: ACCOMPLISHED****

****(Apparently, though go ask the goat how he feels about the situation.)****

****King Arthur and Faithful Squire: 1/2****

****Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: 2****

******SB**RL******

Lily wrenches the doors open and darts into the chilly evening, bereft as it is of light. She runs, as she has never run before, as if there is something great and terrible nipping at her heels, something dark and full of malice following her footsteps.

It's only Severus, of course- but she's not really sure about Severus, not anymore. And now here he was, chasing her, all because she refused to speak to him! Her instinct to run had come out of nowhere; as she had seen his approach, and his every intent of coming to terms with her. This is it, she thinks.

******LE******

****Estimated Time To Feast: 02:02****

"Ah, Miss McGooglyface, I presume?"

Professor McGonagall's lips tighten into that thin, flat line that Sirius is overly familiar with. Remus holds his breath, as he is seldom on the receiving end of this particular expression.

Her lips twitch. She clears her throat.

"Professor McGoo- McGo- Five points from Gryffindor, Mr. Black." Points of pink appear high on her cheeks.

Sirius arches one brow deliciously, all coolness and arrogance. "I confess I am perplexed, Madam- Gryffindor? And I am Mr. Holmes, consulting detective. Extraordinaire." Good God, he'll kill us all._

It is a lucky thing that dear McGoogles does, after all, have a heart fond of mischief, behind that dispassionate exterior- you can see it in the barely-there twinkle in her eyes. It is debatable, however, whether Sirius has the ability to stop when he's _on a roll_, as it were.

"You do look rather smashing today," says Sirius, and the twinkle vanishes. Remus kicks him. Hard.

"Right," Dr. Watson says, "To the point. We have become aware that your hat has gone missing."

"This is correct, Mr. Lupin- might you be able to inquire as to it's whereabouts on my behalf? I would be most indebted." She has sat down behind her desk, shuffling through papers and barely sparing them a glance.

"Please," smirks Remus, "Call me Dr. Watson."

****SB**RL****

Estimated Time To Feast: 01:43

"There are two features of interest in this case,"

"Which are?"

"Well, she wasn't concerned, for one- "

"She's probably got loads of spare ones, she can't wear the same one _all_ the time- "

"Do shut up."

Remus wants to hit Sirius, but tamps the impulse succinctly, instead forcing himself to ask, "And what was the secondâ€|feature of interest?"

"Isn't it obvious?"

Remus's fingers twitch.

****SB**RL****

He had spotted her, alone, loitering in the corridor, as if by perfect serendipity. He has missed her, these past months. She hasn't spoken a word to him, no matter how many times he has tried, not since that awful run in with her wretched sister- and it _kills_ him, that what he did, what he could not have helped doing at that moment, could cause such a rift between them. He regrets it, he loathes what he did in a fit of anger and, it's true, it was outrageous and excessive and probably unforgivable. But in the small, niggling recesses of his mind, he can't be sorry: because nobody could ever, _should_ ever speak to Lily that way.

So when he sees her, miraculously alone, he knows that his eyes are a bit wild and his strides forceful. He can see her look at him, see her face bloom in panic, _Merlin_, that exquisite face, _and_, like a

doe that knows it is being hunted, succumb to flight.

His face crumples, then rearranges itself into a mask of cool indifference- though his feet betray him, carrying him swiftly down the steps, after Lily.

****SS****

Estimated Time To Feast: 01:38

"_Look_, you are _not_ Sherlock Holmes! Get over yourself, Sirius, _honestly-_"

"Don't talk out loud, Moony, you're lowering the IQ of the entire floor."

****SB**RL****

Estimated Time to Feast: 01:33

"Sirius, look- do you actually have any idea how we'll find her hat? Any _leads_, or whatever you call them, hm?"

"Malfoy took it."

"And how in _God's_ name would you know that!"

"A moment, I'm working it out- some silence right now would be marvelous. Look at you, you look so vacant- why don't you _think_, Moony, _think!_"

"_Right!_ That is _it!_ _I have _had it!_" Remus rips off his moustache and stalks off in the direction of the dormitory.

"Oh, come back, you idiot! Just getting into the spirit, is all!"

"_Wanker!_" _comes the distant response.

****RL**SB****

Estimated Time To Feast: 0:37

" 'M sorry, lads, but there en't a bit 'o trouble out here, nothin' tha' I can't handle, tha' is."

" 'S alright, Hagrid, just thought we'd check..we're having a contest, see, and..had a bit of a run-in with the house elves.."

" 'Yer didn' make 'em mad, did yer? Right beastly little fellows they are, when they's mad at summat.."

"Er, no, no Hagrid, we didn't. Right, well, cheerio then.."

"Yeh two look a sight, though! King Arthur andâ€|who're you again, Peter?"

"His Faithful Squire."

"Right, right.. well, ye'd best hurry up, the Feast is in a half

hour!"

"Thanks, Hagrid, we'll see you there! Happy Halloween!"

They leave quietly, disappointed in the lack of distressed creatures they had hoped to find near Hagrid's hut, of the Forbidden Forest, or _anywhere_ on the grounds.

"They'll win," says Peter, morosely.

"Maybe not," says James, but he doesn't really believe it. He's not sure if he's had the best Halloween of his life either, and he's _definitely_ sure that he is tired, and could use a nap.

They trudge in silence up the path to the castle, each lost in their own thoughts. Their costumes have become a little battered in the escapade with the House Elves, and Peter is sporting a mild, though ugly-looking cut over his eye. There is a hint of the setting sun still present at the edges of the fast-approaching night, a light but penetrating wind stealing through their tunics, forcing them to fold their arms closer to their bodies. The forgotten coconuts bang together sullenly where they have been tied to Peter's hip, setting the rhythm of their walk. There is no other way around it, _What a waste of Halloween!, _and James considers just going back to the Room and seeing what else it might yield.

The silence is broken to pieces with a shriek, and the shouts of two people- one male, one female. The boys look at each other, all lethargy dropping from them with the possibility of a chance to prove themselves, get the better of _those two. _Their eyes meet and, as one, they charge up the path, towards the source of the noise.

****jp**pp****

"Lily!" Severus shouts after her, desperation present in his voice. She is close; her white limbs glint in the semi-darkness of the waxing moon. The adrenaline pumps through his veins, the burn spreads through his legs. At the crest of the hill, he reaches her- arm extended, he grasps her elbow, stopping her short and pulling her close- and inevitably, she shrieks at him, pushing him away, two hands on his chest, "How _could _you!"

"Lily, I- "

"_No_, Severus! You _hit my sister! _Who _does _that, what is _wrong_ with you!"

"Lily, just- "

"No, you _listen!"_ She shrills the words to the coming Halloween night, fury blazing her cheeks, hair wild and on end in the wind. Severus stands, wheezing slightly, unsure of himself, unsure of why they have reached such a fever pitch- but he knows as surely as he knows his name that this is not just about that sister: there is something much larger at stake.

She takes a breath, a deep sighing gasp full of air: "You had every opportunity this summer. To apologize. In any way. _But you didn't._ No, listen- " She puts up her hand- "Don't talk. What you did was

inexcusable, you knew we had to work this out in our own way, but not only did you interfere, you gave her a bloody lip! In my parent's house! In front of people! You hurt her. Can you imagine, for just one moment, what that must be like? What she must have felt, how it is now completely impossible for her to even acknowledge my existence? You have ruined this relationship for me, utterly! And then, and then! Not a word from you, and what do I see, you hanging around Mulciber and Lestrangle of all bloody people! They're awful, you can't stand them, Severus, you're- you're not like them, don't you see! I don't know you anymore!"

"Lily, I've been- since we got back, I've been- Lily, I'm sorry! Truly!"

She makes a noise in her throat that is a little less wild, and a little more yeah, right._

"No, look at me- I'm sorry. I'm beyond sorry, I- I've missed you so much, and I- I didn't know what to say, how to say- and you kept on- not talking- "

"Severus, if you were sorry, you would've found a way to tell me."

"Look, I- Lily." His knees bend slowly, falling to the earth.
"Please. I'm truly sorry and- Mulciber and Lestrangle- I- don't like them, I was..lonely. Please, Lily I- "

"OI!"

And over the rise of the hill, panting slightly and followed by a marginally round squire, comes King Arthur. It is the worst possible moment to be caught as he is, on his knees, begging forgiveness to a girl. He knows it's already too late, Potter will always remember this and never, ever let him forget it. Severus launches to his feet in one swift motion, shoots a miserable look at Lily- I'm so sorry- and turns away, tracing the dark path back to the castle.

I know what it's like, Lily, to be ridiculed, to be mocked, to be the butt of every joke. I know what it's like to be beaten and to have others look on, and do nothing. I know what it's like to be dealt pain, and to deal it in return. I know what it's like to hurt you, and I will never do it again._

"OI, come back here, youâ€|mangyâ€|cur!" roars Peter, as he puffs after Severus, coconuts banging wildly.

Lily looks after them with tight lips and regret written on her face. James mops the back of his hand across his brow, wiping away the little droplets of sweat which running up the hill afforded him.
"Phew! You alright, Evans? Was that you shrieking away?"

She whirls on him, and it is suddenly very clear that she wants nothing to do with him. "Oh, Potter, why are you always lurking? I can take care of myself," she says, wearily. She looks the worse for wear, and her eyes are shining a little too brightly, her voice edged in a slightly hysterical tremor. "And what in Merlin's name have you got on? Were those coconuts I saw Peter banging about?"

James reddens. "I'm King Arthur," he says. "Will you be my damsel in

distress?" _Wrong answer,_ he knows it immediately but it seemed to have tripped off his tongue in some excuse for a very distant hope. A swiftly dealt kick in the shin is his reward, _ow ow ow_, before she turns and marches off down the path.

****LE**SS**JP**pp****

Estimated Time To Feast: 0:35

Inevitably, Sirius has gone to find Malfoy, on the off chance that he did really take it. _It's too easy,_ he thinks, as he stalks his prey- classically flattened against the wall, inching his way to the corner, where he can hear Malfoy speaking to an unknown second, in whispers a bit too loud for a scheming conversation. They are _very_ bad at this, Sirius thinks, as he pokes his head surreptitiously around the corner. There it is, McGonagall's hat, in all it's hat-ly glory, being pawed at by Lucius Malfoy. _What in the name of Merlin was he doing?_

"There has to be _one_ hair in here, just one- that old bat must be one-hundred-and-three, there is no way she isn't losing any of her hair."

"We've been over it a million times, she must have a spell on that idiotic bun of hers so it won't shed, or something- "

"_There must be a hair!_" Lucius snarls. _This is way, way too passionate for a Halloween prank,_ Sirius thinks. But Malfoy continues: "They'll have our heads, you imbecile, if we _don't_ bring them something!_"

"We'll just- I don't know, have to find another way, there's nothing here!"

Predictably, this is the moment when Lucius angles his head _just so_, and spies Sirius's nose poking from around the corner. Alarm registers in his eyes with incredible speed; his wand is whipped from his robes- but Sirius is one step ahead of him, _"Accio McGonagall's Hat!_", _and with the enraged cries of the two behind him, he takes off down the corridor, the coveted garment clasped tightly in his sweaty fingers, with the wind at his heels.

****SB****

There is a rap at the door.

"Are you expecting anyone, Minerva?" says Dumbledore, as he peers from over the top of his spectacles at the classroom upkeep chart she has drawn up for him. She sighs, barely containing her annoyance, and pushes her glasses farther up her nose.

"Oh, it's those wretched boys, I expect- I dare say they've found my purloined hat. Come in!"

Sirius nearly falls over himself on opening the door, slamming it shut with much more force than necessary and slumping against it, recovering his labored breath. There are two dull thumps from the other side of the door, followed by curses. He raises his eyes, and is met with the stare of both Professors McGonagall and Dumbledore,

eyebrows raised and lips curved upward in the slightest smile, respectively.

"Found your hat, Professor," he says breathlessly, struggling to his feet.

"This does appear to be the case. Thank you. And what, pray tell, has become of Dr. Watson?"

"Erm, he.." the rest of the sentence is lost in a little stream of mutters.

"What was that? Do speak up."

"He, erm, didn't want to do it anymore," says Sirius, in a rare moment of shame.

"I can't imagine why not." she replies tartly.

"Professors- I- there's something that you, I suppose, well- well, Malfoy had your hat."

"Ah-hah. Five points from Slytherin. No," she considers- "Perhaps twenty. Yes, I quite like the sound of that."

"But Professor- him and- whoever he was with, it might've been Goyle, or Crabbe, I can never tell which at a distance- they were looking for something- a hair? I dunno, it was all a bit dodgy, they seemed- really put out. To put it mildly."

The two Professors share loaded and significant glances. Sirius is not an idiot, and on seeing this-

"What? Why do you think they took it? D'you think they're up to something? Never liked Malfoy, he's _horrible- _"

"_Thank you_, Mr. Black, that will be all," Dumbledore interjects. His face no longer carries the bright amusement of a moment ago.

"And thank you for the hat. You may consider those five points from Gryffindor..back to Gryffindor. You are dismissed, Mr. Black."

"But..!"

"_Dismissed_, Mr. Black, enjoy the Halloween Feast." At the words, Sirius deposits the mangled hat on the desk and slumps quietly from the room.

A brief silence follows his exit, broken by Minerva in a tone of apprehension- "Albus, you don't think-"

"Unfortunately, Minerva, _I don't know_. But I do have my suspicions which, I think, are not altogether unfounded." Dumbledore has seated himself in a chair opposite, leaning back and gazing at the ceiling as if for answers, fingers steepled under his chin. The ceiling gives him nothing in return.

"I had no idea the situation had become so dire," Minerva says,

removing her spectacles and rubbing at her eyes wearily.

"There is something more sinister at work than we had supposed, I fear- we must be glad that they did not, apparently, succeed in their mission."

"This is outrageous- for a _student_-!"

"Yes, I knowâ€|" sighs Dumbledore heavily. He crumples a corner of the forgotten parchment in his lap idly between his thumb and forefinger. "We must be vigilant. That it has progressed this far isâ€|unacceptable. I will deal with Mr. Malfoy, and Misters Crabbe and Goyle, for I doubt that one would be privy to such information without the other at hand."

"Of course."

He looks at her, his face more lined than she can ever remember. "These children..Black, Potterâ€|Lupinâ€|Longbottom, Evans, _all_ of them, Minerva, _they are so young_, and so eagerâ€|when I think of what a time awaits themâ€|"

"You think it will come to that?"

"I do." Deep blue eyes meet green ones, in a glance both penetrating and deeply anxious. "I suppose," Dumbledore says, "May fortune favor the foolish?"

"And may fortune favor the bold," Minerva agrees quietly.

They are still a moment, each lost in their own thoughts.

****SB**AD**MM****

They sit at the Gryffindor table, eating much too softly amid a Hall filled with ghosts and angels and demons and general merry-making, leering pumpkins and heaps of treacle tarts and pitchers of mulled cider. The noise is not quite deafening, but the gaiety and exuberance of the night swirls around them like a physical force. They are the eye of the storm, the center of taut energy and silence, of odd glances and awkward constraint.

Remus breaks the silence, before someone loses an eye to this completely un-Marauder-like severity. "Well, lads, it didn't go quite as planned, did it?"

"Lily kicked James," Peter blurts, and it is as if the dam has burst.

"Pete!" James exclaims, wounded, then- "Well it's not as if you had much better luck with _Snivellus-" _(and it's true, because Peter is sporting a rather nasty looking bruise on his temple in addition to the Elf-Made-Cut, and his coconuts seem to have run away)

"Remus, I'm sorry- " says Sirius at the same time, deerstalker drooping over his eyes-

"No, it's my fault, I shouldn't have- flown off the handle, you're right, Dr. Watson was built in essence to take all the crap- "

They seem to have run out of words, and eat again silently for a moment, faces flushed.

"Malfoy's up to something," Sirius says finally, after setting his fork down on the empty plate, bereft of pie. Remus sighs exasperatedly.

"Do tell."

"Well, it was him, Moony- Malfoy took McGonagall's hat- and I caught him at it! An epic fluke, of course, but- it was Malfoy, and Goyle, I think- and they were looking for _hairs. _For McGonagall's _hair. _Now, unless they have the same seemingly undying passion for her as _I_ do, or are just into some seriously kinky stuff- what do you reckon?"

James quirks an eyebrow at him, while Remus has already dove into a handy book, assumedly looking for relevant information.

"Notâ€¦|_Polyjuice?"_

"D'you reckon?"

"Are you saying that Malfoy was trying to sneak someone into the castle?"

"He as good as admitted they were working with someone elseâ€¦|someone with the power to pulverize them, it sounded like- they're in for it, actuallyâ€¦|"

"Did you tell McGonagall?"

"And Dumbledore, 'course I did. "

The festive night, which should have been spent in pranks and good humor, crumbles into the darting of eyes and the eavesdropping of conversations, bringing nothing new but the unfamiliar feeling of unease in this, their home.

****SB**PP**JP**RL****

King Arthur and Faithful Squire: 1/2

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson: 3

Conclusion: DRAW

****SB**PP**JP**RL****

Found tucked into the pages of Lily Evan's Potions book: one (1) note containing the following:

_Please forgive me. _

A/N: Special thanks to Monty Python and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle for their exceptional brilliance.

End
file.